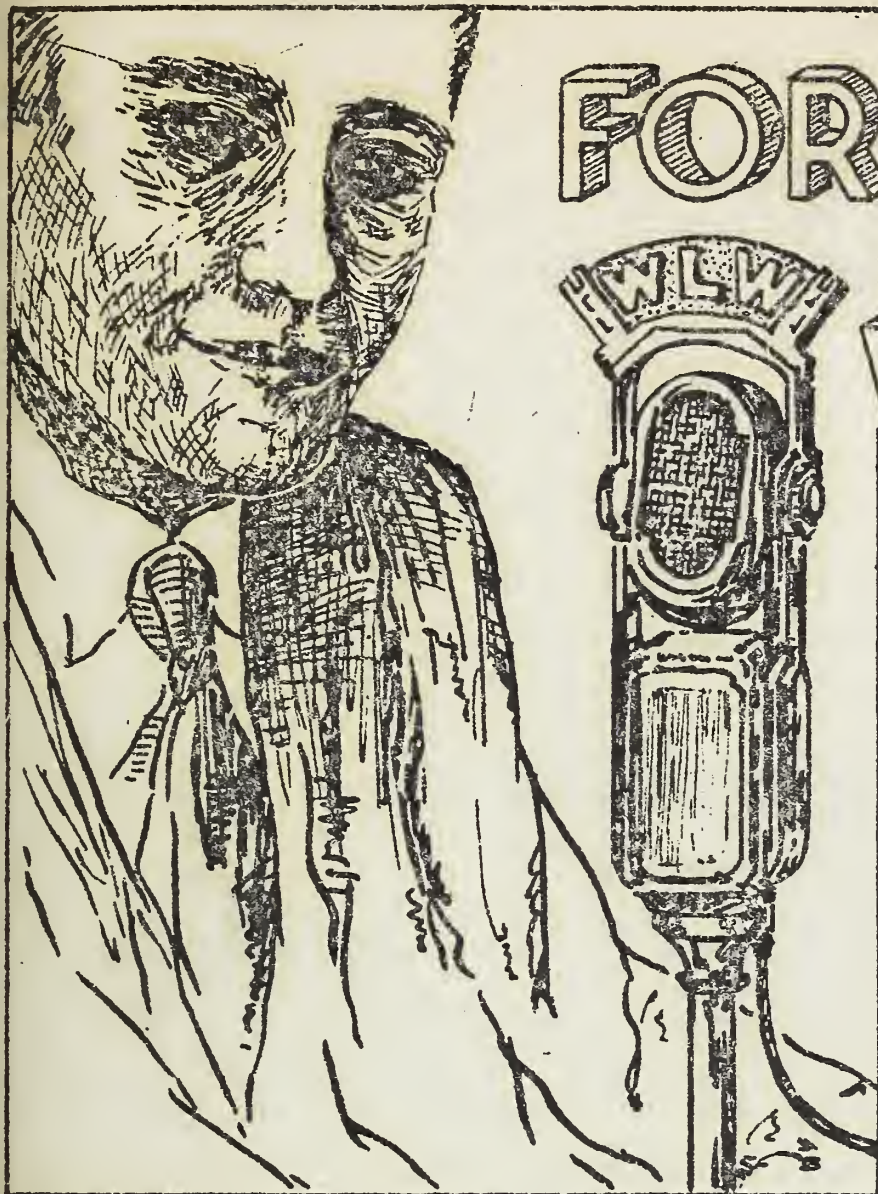


## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.





# FORTUNES WASHED AWAY

A Series of  
Dramatizations  
of Better  
Land Use

No. 140 December 28, 1940 1:15 p.m.

"POTTAWATOMIE"

**W·L·W CINCINNATI**

United States Department of Agriculture  
Soil Conservation Service  
Dayton · Ohio



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

ORGAN: FANFARE

VOICES: (IN UNISON)

I give you a land of sun and showers  
And summer the whole year long;  
I give you a land where the golden grain  
Rolls by to the mocking-bird's song.

SOUND: Clap of thunder:..

ANNOUNCER

Pottawatomie! The 140th consecutive episode of Fortunes Washed  
Away!

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

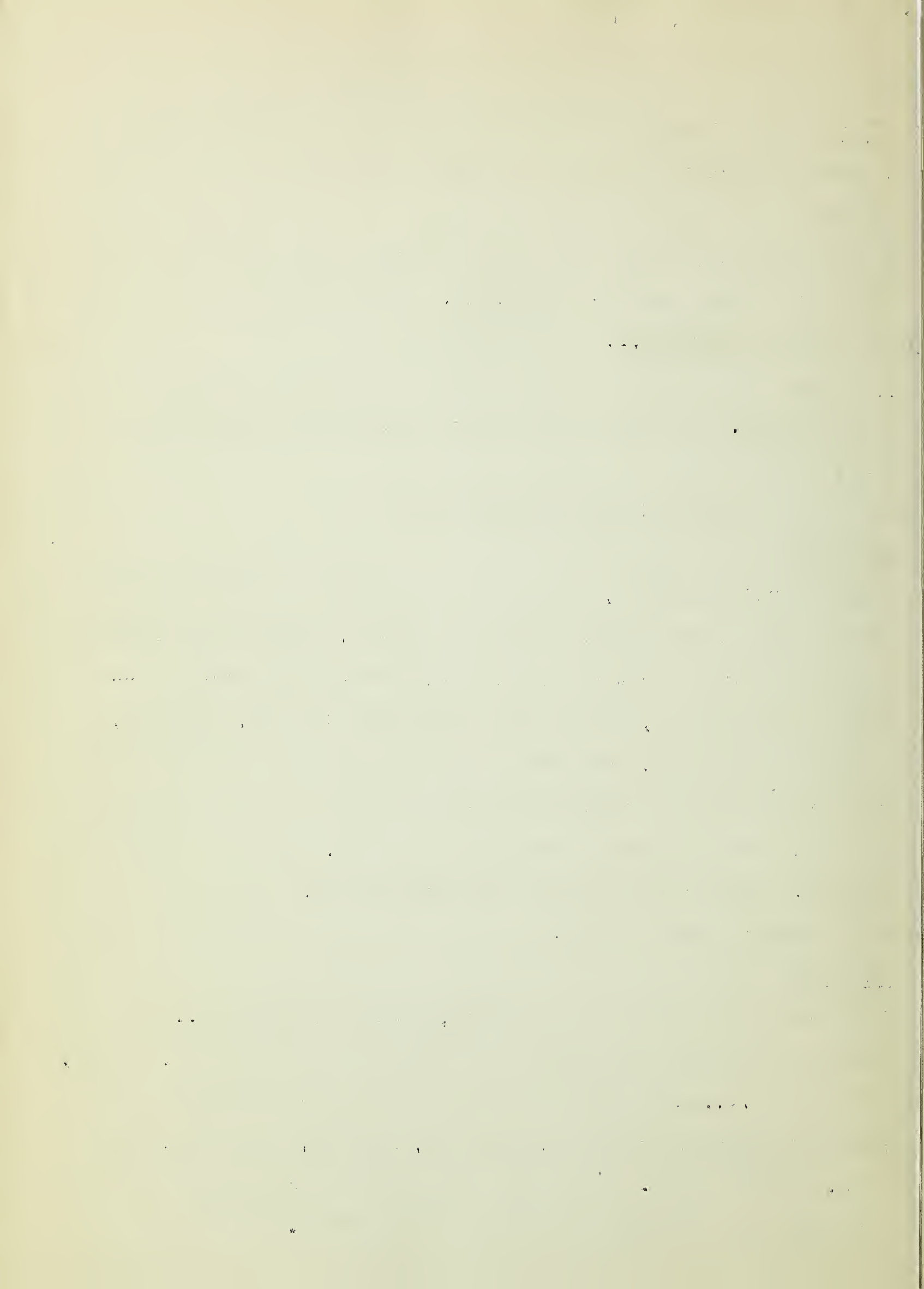
ANNOUNCER

Comparatively speaking, Oklahoma is a new state -- the 46th star  
on the flag of the United States of America. Until 1907, it was  
composed of two territories, one being the Indian Territory --  
land of the red man, land of the Chickasaw, Choctaw, Cherokee,  
Creek, and Seminole, land of winding serpentine hills, covered  
with timber, land of undulating plateaus deeply scored by many  
streams, land of prairies covered with grass, and land of fertile  
valleys. Here is the home of the Pottawatomie.

ORGAN: SYMBOLIC MUSIC BEHIND...

NARRATOR

Come with me to Pottawatomie County, land of the Indian....a  
territory that has been under the national flags of Spain, France,  
and England....where villages unfolded from the wilderness and  
grew into prosperous cities, churches, schools, railroads, high-  
ways, fertile farms. Come back with me half a century, back to  
the days when my people first moved from Kansas.



ORGAN: FADE OUT.

SOUND: Door opens and closes...

COMMISSIONER

Well, Chief Harjo?

HARJO

We would speak with you, Commissioner.

FOX

Our people, they have trouble.

COMMISSIONER

Again? By thunder, I thought when you moved here from Kansas your troubles with the white men would be over. All this bickering over nothing...

HARJO

It is not trouble with white men, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER

Can it be the land? We bought this land from the Seminoles and the Creeks for 30 cents an acre. It's good land, Chief Harjo.

FOX

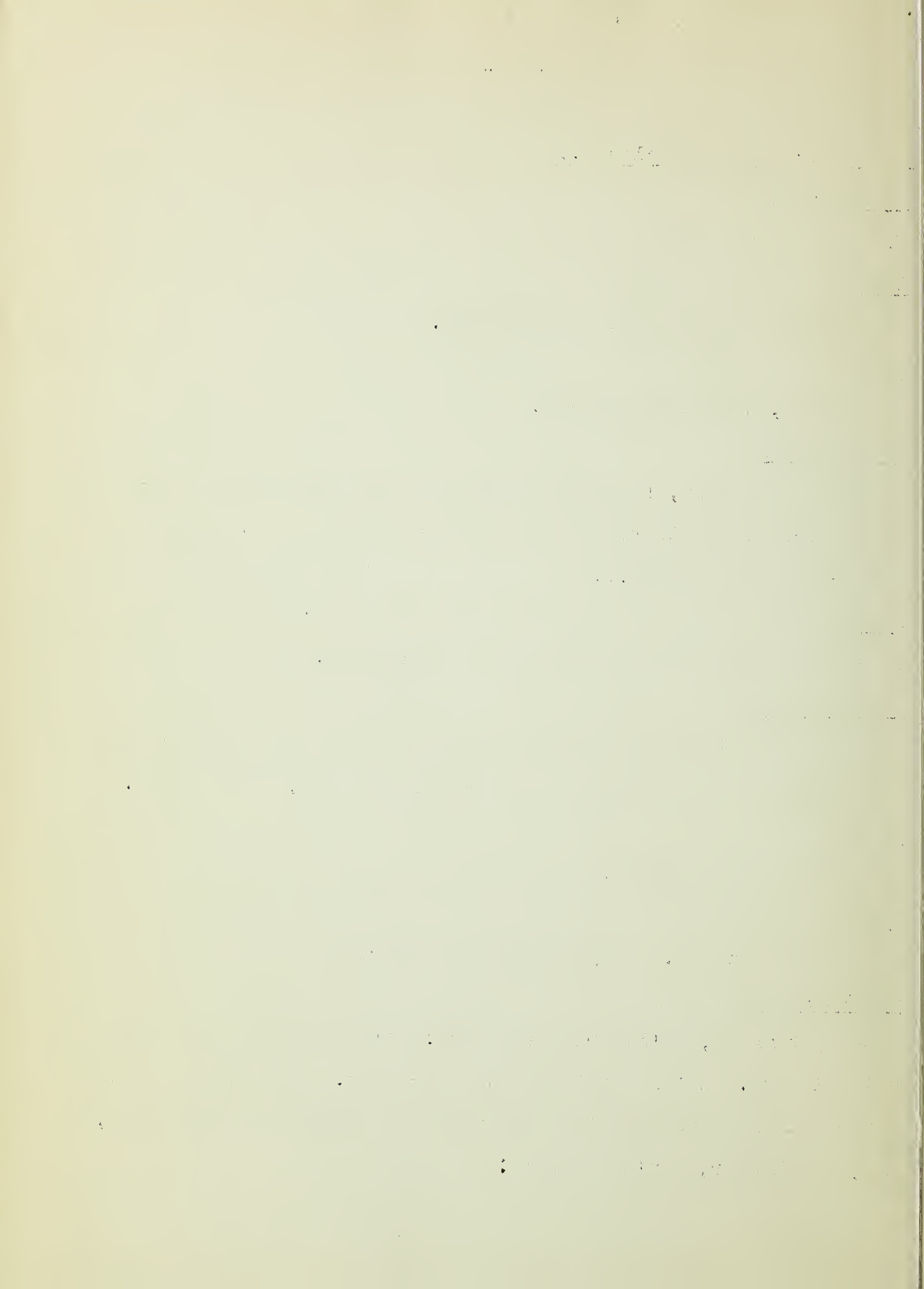
The land is good indeed.

HARJO

It is the Shawnees. They refuse to move out.

COMMISSIONER

Then by thunder, we'll drive them out! I'll get in touch with Colonel Moss. He'll get the army after them. The United States government has promised the Pottawatomie country to your tribes, and, by thunder, you'll have it!





HARJO

No, Commissioner. We want no more trouble with other tribes. We want to settle this dispute among ourselves, but without bloodshed. But we know you are the voice for the government, and we want you to join us in our council.

COMMISSIONER (LAUGHING)

By the devil himself. Of all people, you are the ones who want to compromise!

FOX

We are tired of bloodshed, Commissioner. We have seen the folly of fighting and quarreling among one another. Time after time, our tribes have settled in peace, only to be driven on and on. This Pottawatomie country is great. Rich soil. Fine hunting grounds. We would like to settle it in peace, and build a great nation.

ORGAN: SYMBOLIC MUSIC BEHIND...

NARRATOR

Pottawatomie County...heart of Oklahoma, cream of the Canadian Valley...land of Salt Creek, Pond Creek, Deer Creek, Dance Creek, Rock Creek, Squirrel Creek...land of diversified farming. Home of hardy, industrious pioneers who changed a wilderness into a busy, populous region. First there were sod homes, tent cities, dugouts. Then good homes took the place of dugouts, sod houses, board shanties. It was a great day for the city of Shawnee when, in 1897, the first train, the "Lillian Russell", was due to arrive...

ORGAN: FADE OUT.

SOUND: Crowd noises...

COMMISSIONER

You seem to be as excited about this great event as I am, Harjo.



HARJO

And why not, Commissioner? Since the Indian Territory was opened to settlement, our people have learned to adapt themselves to your ways.

FOX

Who knows...perhaps we may be the ones that are civilizing you.

COMMISSIONER (LAUGHING)

Eh? By thunder, Fox, you may be right at that. My, how times have changed. Do you remember ten years ago, how the land looked then?

FOX

We remember well. The land was covered with timber...great pecan trees. But your people have cut them down.

COMMISSIONER

Come, come, Fox! This is great farming land. Why, with the rainfall we have here, and the fertile soil, we can grow no end of fine crops.

FOX

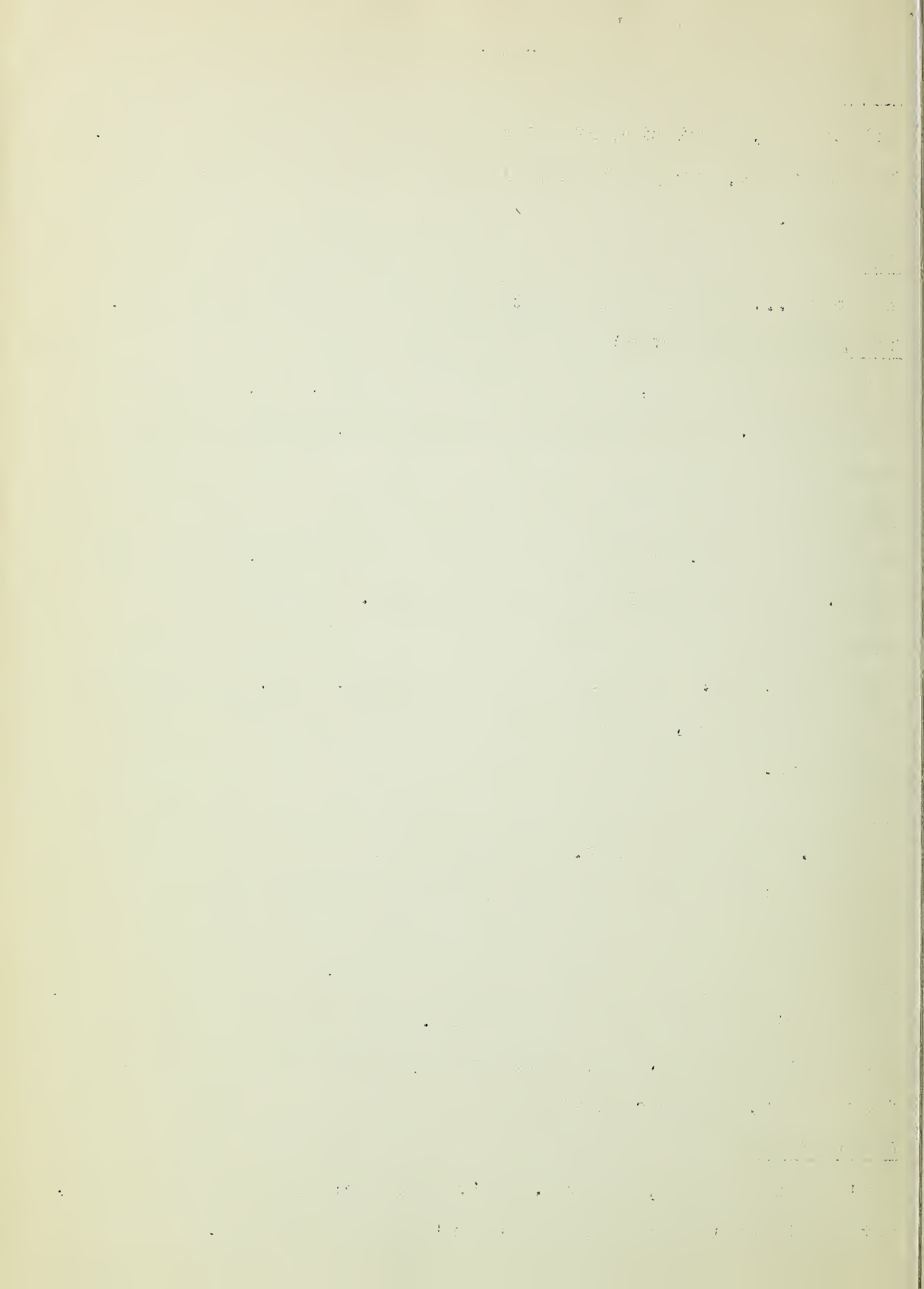
Perhaps. But perhaps not. Our people have handled these lands and other lands since life began. Did we grow corn on the hillsides?

HARJO

The hillsides were not meant for corn. The Great Manitou meant the hills for trees. No, Commissioner, perhaps we are not yet "civilized", as you call it, after all.

COMMISSIONER

You're strange ones, you two. We've been friends these many years, yet sometimes I feel as though I don't know you at all.



HARJO

This country, and our people, will always be strange to you.

But this country, and our people, are our life. It is strange to you, just as the "Lillian Russell" is strange to us.

SOUND: Crowd noises grow slightly louder, with occasional shouts...

FOX

Tell us about the "Lillian Russell", Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER

Oh, the "Lilly?" Why, I've never seen her, but they say she's a real train. Fast mail. Plenty of speed. Lots of shiny brass. (CHANGING HIS TONE OF VOICE.) But just between us, they tell one story about her. They say she collided with a buggy over by Okemah. The buggy lost a wheel -- but the engine was laid up for days. (LAUGHS UPROARIOUSLY).

SHOUT OFF MIKE

Here she comes!

SOUND: Crowd shouts, cheers, etc...

SOUND: Train comes steaming in, with old-fashioned screeching, shrill whistle....gradually comes to halt, with puff-puffing...

COMMISSIONER

Isn't she a marvel?

FOX (deliberately)

That...Commissioner...that...small black object is the "Lilly?"

COMMISSIONER

That's her! My, my...

FOX

I saw one like that on a corner in Tulsa once. Only a funny-looking man stood beside it, and he had a monkey with a tin-cup. I think they called it a peanut roaster.





ORGAN: SYMBOLIC MUSIC BEHIND

NARRATOR

Much happened to Pottawatomie County agriculture in the following years. The soil was fertile, yet it was but a shell, and constant cropping wore away that shell.

VOICE

Soil erosion!

NARRATOR

Lean years saw the farm land go untended, houses left vacant and slumping in value. Then, in the gloomy depression days following the World War, oil re-entered the picture.

VOICE

Black gold!

NARRATOR

Oil -- black gold. Oil meant work. Oil meant money and prosperity. Proper tillage methods, just then being introduced, were thrown into the discard. Oil prices were high, hopes were higher...

ORGAN: UP TO SUSTAINED HIGH PITCH, THEN OUT.

NARRATOR (cold)

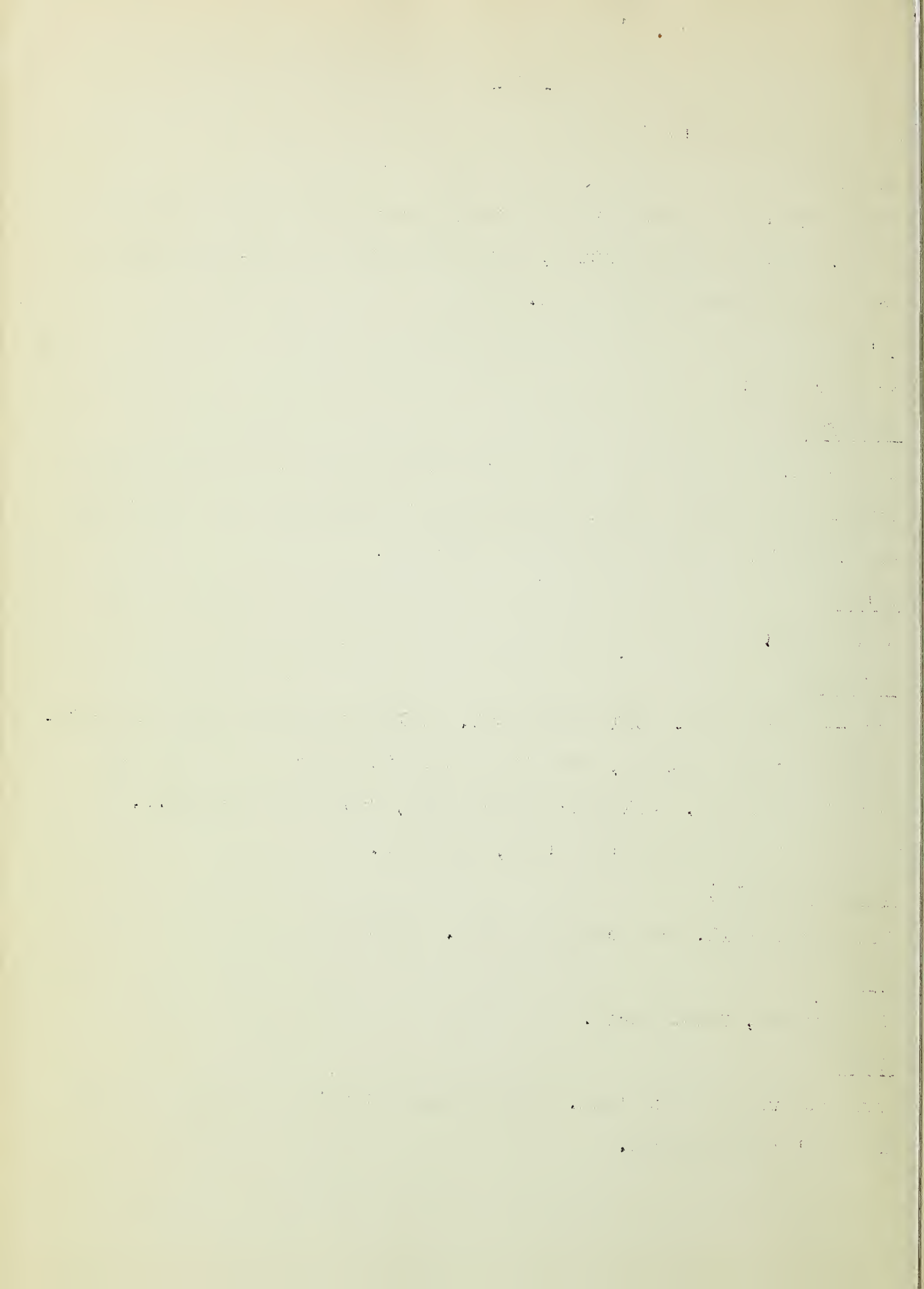
Oil prices fell. The boom was over. (PAUSE).

FOX

We grow old, Chief Harjo.

HARJO

And with us goes the land. Pottawatomie County, as fair a garden as man has ever known.



FOX

And so life runs its course. Exploration, exploitation, exhaustion. The white man thought that land was everlasting. Tools would wear out, men would die, but the land would remain. Now, the land set aside for the Sac and the Fox, the Shawnee and the Pottawatomie, goes with us.

HARJO

Perhaps. And perhaps not, to use your own words. For what foolish man can destroy, he can also preserve. The newspapers tell us that Pottawatomie County farmers have organized two soil conservation districts to keep the soil.

FOX

Then they, like us, have learned to band together and settle their vital problems.

ORGAN: SYMBOLIC MUSIC BEHIND...

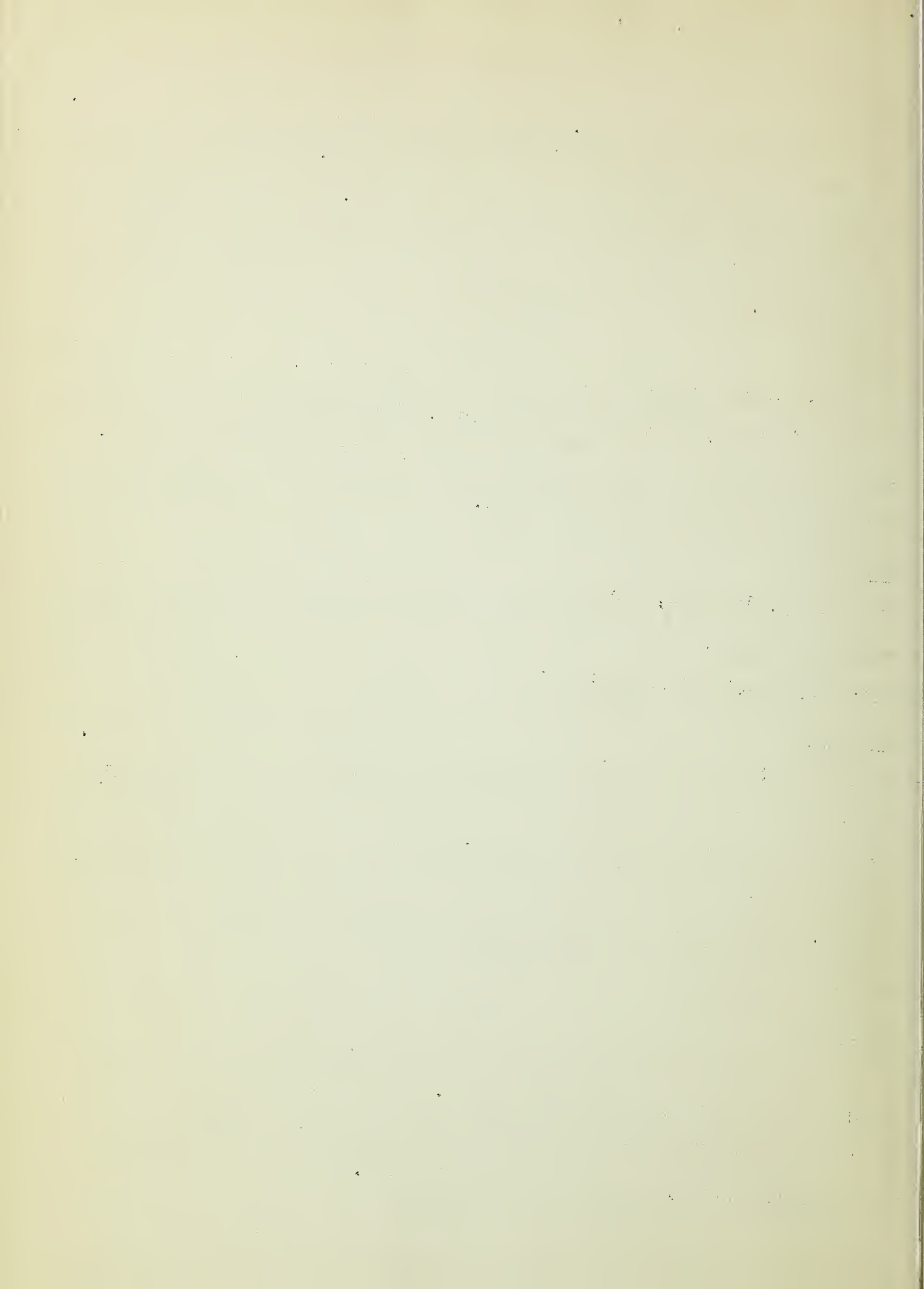
NARRATOR

Today, Pottawatomie County agriculture stands at the crossroads. For half a century farmers have taken from the soil with little thought of putting anything back. Now, they're setting themselves to build their soil to insure permanent agricultural prosperity. That's the way life is, and should be.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

Thus, the history of Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma, heart of the Canadian Valley, passes in review. And now, once again we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and here is Hal Jenkins.





JENKINS

Thanks, \_\_\_\_\_. And there's still more to be told about the way the farmers down there in the Sooner State are working to preserve their remaining topsoil.

ANNOUNCER

Then let's hear the whole story, Hal.

JENKINS

Well, first of all, cattle and dairy products bring in more money than any other agricultural crop to the farmers. Last year, oil royalties, leases, and bonuses, brought in a million and a half dollars to farmers, while cattle brought in a million...

ANNOUNCER

And that in an oil county, too.

JENKINS

Yes, it shows that farmers down there are learning that the crops that grow and feed on the land are, first and foremost, their standby. Cotton is the next cash crop in importance, but they're getting away from it, because it's a row crop, and a row crop on sloping, or even gently rolling land, means but one thing...

ANNOUNCER

Soil erosion.

JENKINS

And you know by now, \_\_\_\_\_, that continued soil erosion means a decline in cash income. Alfalfa is becoming more and more prominent, and in spite of the fact that so many pecan trees were cut down, pecans still rank fourth, agriculturally speaking.

ANNOUNCER

Who knows...maybe some of those pecans we had in our Christmas fruit cake came from Pottawatomie County.



JENKINS

Could be...although I hasten to add that Ewing Jones's home state doesn't produce all of the good pecans. Why, in my own native state of North Dakota, we used to grow....but that's a different story, \_\_\_\_\_. Let me tell you about a gully control contest.

ANNOUNCER

Surely not a contest to see which farmers could produce the most gullies?

JENKINS

On the contrary...to find which farmer could do the best job of healing them. John S. Malone, who was in the first graduating class from Oklahoma A. & M. College, was county agricultural agent in Tulsa County for 15 years, before he went to Pottawatomie County as general manager of the Shawnee Chamber of Commerce. Naturally, he was conservation minded, so he went into a huddle with county agent James Lawrence, and they worked out a gully control contest. Cash prizes were paid, but more valuable from a long-time standpoint, was the value of the land reclaimed or preserved.

ANNOUNCER

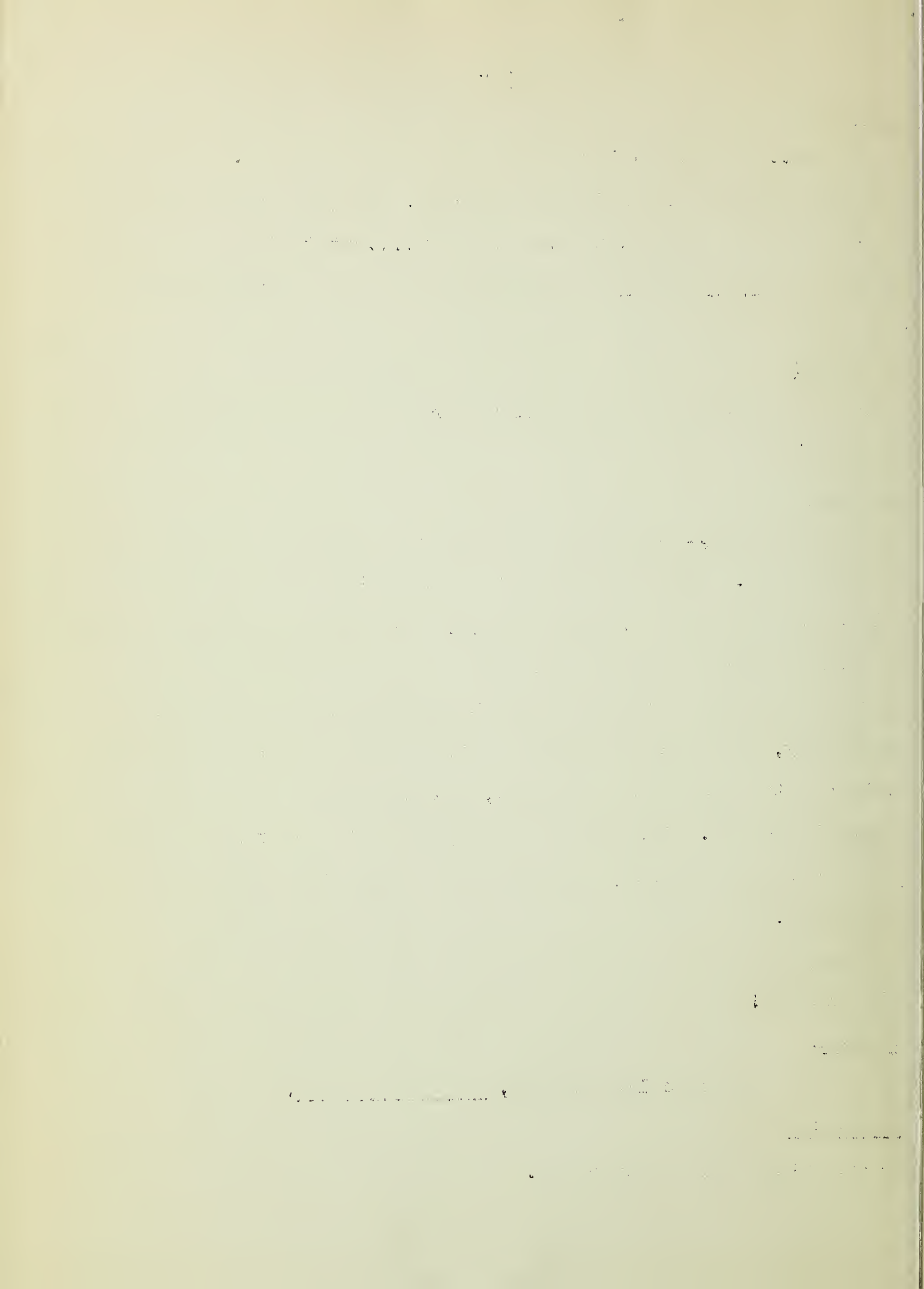
The winners!

JENKINS

Here are a few symbolic ribbons, \_\_\_\_\_.

ANNOUNCER

First prize: G. E. Yarbrough.



JENKINS

Mr. Yarbrough had a 20-acre abandoned field that he called "Custer's Last Stand." He built a diversion terrace just above the gullied field, to cut off excess water running from the slope above. Then he built a complete system of terraces in the field, making dirt fills in the gullies, and then seeding the dirt fills with Bermuda grass. Now he is seeding the entire field to Bermuda grass for permanent pasture. Mr. Yarbrough used a tractor and grader borrowed from the local school district to build his terraces. And that, \_\_\_\_\_, is one of the beauties of cooperation, just like they have in his local soil conservation district...that machinery is available to anyone within the district. The Yarbrough field had been abandoned. But according to Sam Durham, Oklahoma A. & M. pasture specialist who did the judging, that field will soon be producing 50 pounds of butterfat per acre. Today, Mr. G. E. Yarbrough is one of the supervisors of the Shawnee soil conservation district. Another ribbon, \_\_\_\_\_.

ANNOUNCER

Mr. T. M. Kirk.

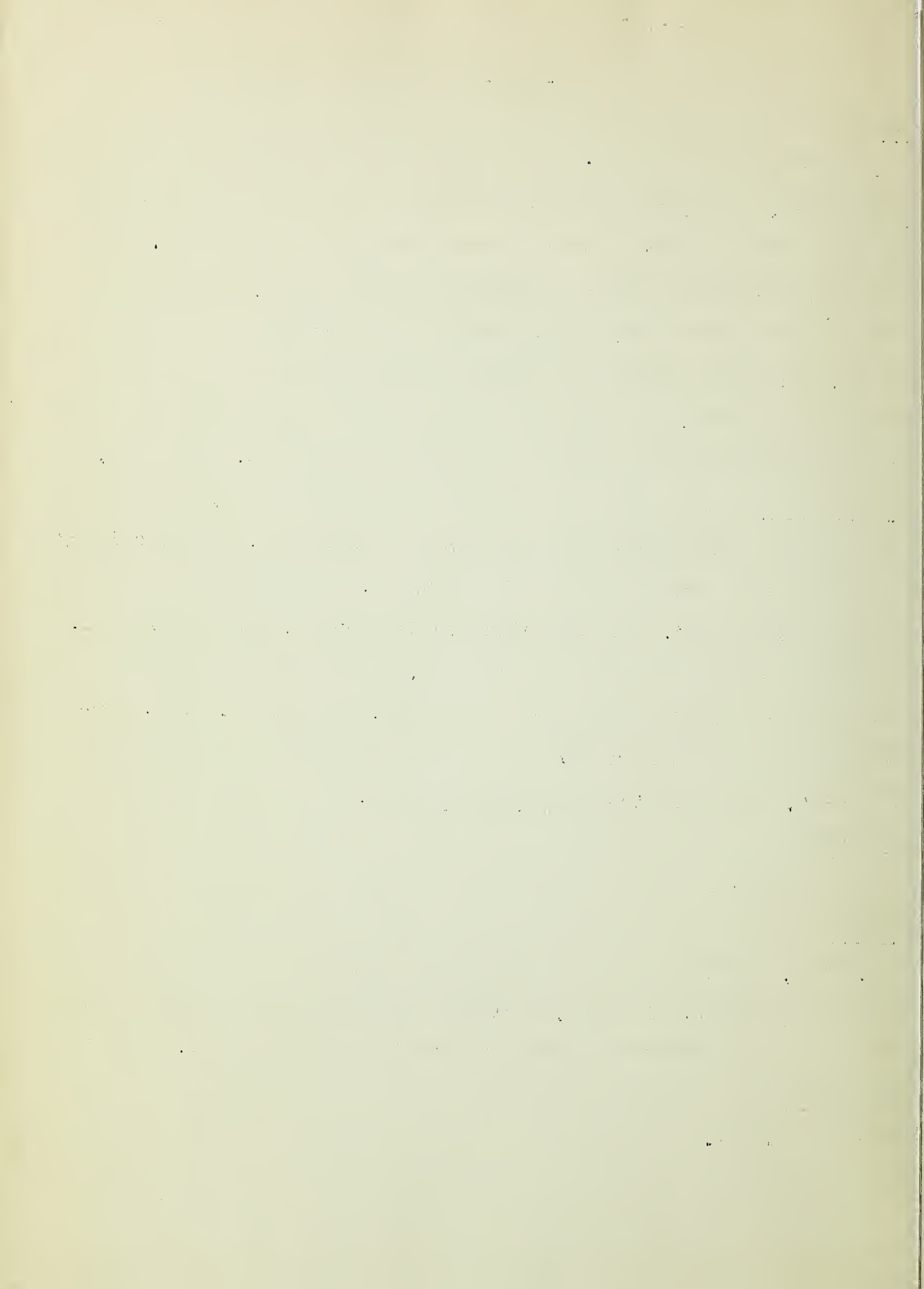
JENKINS

Mr. Kirk, who lives near Maud, Oklahoma, also used Bermuda grass to heal his gullies. In fact, during dry weather, he hauled 300 buckets of water to the field to stimulate growth of the Bermuda. Next?

ANNOUNCER

Clifford Earls.





JENKINS

Cliff Earls is a young fellow, and once was a 4-H club boy, where he learned many little lessons in soil conservation. He plowed in his gullies with his own team and an ordinary turning plow, and seeded them to grass mixtures. You'll notice, \_\_\_\_\_, how often vegetation is being used to control soil erosion.

ANNOUNCER

H. M. Harrell.

JENKINS

Here's a case where vegetation was supported by structures. Have you ever noticed how many farmers try to control gullies by throwing in old car bodies, or old stoves....

ANNOUNCER

....and tin cans...

JENKINS

Mr. Harrell used tin cans, but instead of just dumping them in, and letting the next rain wash under them, or cut around them and thus make a worse gully than before, he tied his tin cans in sacks. He placed them carefully in the gullies, then threw dirt around the sacks, seeded the dirt with grass mixtures, so that he would have a combination of structures plus vegetation...and \_\_\_\_\_, just to show you that the folks in Pottawatomie County are going to save their soil through cooperation, one filling station hauled out a bunch of old oil cans to Mr. Harrell. (JENKINS CONTINUES.)



JENNINS (CONTINUED)

Things like that don't seem much on the surface, I guess, but little gestures like that filling station made do a lot toward awakening interest in soil conservation. Pottawatomie County, Oklahoma, is quite a ways inland -- and I doubt if it will ever have to defend its soil from invasion from another country. In the meantime, it's doing it's level best to defend its soil from an internal enemy -- soil erosion. You know, \_\_\_\_\_, soil conservation may seem vague, and abstract, to a lot of people. But you know, and I know, and the farmers who have to get down and grub for a living from the soil know, that it's not, and that it's mighty important. And as old Chief Harjo said, "That's the way life is, and that's the way life should be."

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

JENNINS (on cue)

This is Hal Jenkins, speaking for the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture. Goodbye, friends, until next Saturday at this same time over WLW, when once again we bring you a story of "Fortunes Washed Away."

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

#

